



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 05/07/2024

ITEM NO: 16

DESK ITEM

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DATE: May 7, 2024  
TO: Mayor and Town Council  
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager  
SUBJECT: Approve West Valley Community Services, Counseling and Support Services for Youth, and AWO as Potential Community Service Partners to Provide their Respective Services at the Interim Community Center

**REMARKS:**

Attachment 2 contains public comment received between 11:01 a.m. on Monday, May 6, and 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2024.

**Attachment previously received with the Staff Report:**

1. Statements of Interest from Prospective Service Providers

**Attachment received with this Desk Item:**

2. Public comment received between 11:01 a.m. on Monday, May 6, and 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2024.

**PREPARED BY:** Jenna De Long  
Deputy Town Clerk

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**From:** [Folake Phillips](#)  
**To:** [Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment Item #16  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 7, 2024 12:34:10 AM

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[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello,

Kindly add my comments below for inclusion in a desk item. Thank you.

### **MY COMMENTS**

My name is Folake Phillips. I am the founder and executive director. I am pleased, on behalf of our nonprofit AWO, to have submitted a Statement of Interest respectfully requesting to become a prospective Community Partner with the Town and provide services to the community at the Interim Community Center, also known as the Adult Recreation Center, located at 208 E. Main, Los Gatos. We are doubly pleased that the Town of Los Gatos is seeking to expand its offerings and support to the community and its nonprofits. We have been based in Los Gatos since inception in 2020 and continue to serve the community and its surrounding areas including Campbell, San Jose, Saratoga, Monte Sereno and beyond. The Vision of AWO is to achieve a more inclusive and representative world by focusing on the unheard stories of individuals within society to build a more collective understanding about ourselves.

To deliver our innovative HUEmanity programs, we use education and awareness supported by the arts and culture. The art forms we use to support our efforts are storytelling, music and dance. We are well vast in implementing community engagement events, public education and awareness events that promote community conversations, dialogue and different perspectives from black, indigenous, ethnic, urban, and rural artists and speakers, who come from diverse backgrounds and use their life experiences to inspire, empower and model how to break down barriers and bring healing to local communities. Myself and Debra Crenshaw, our Executive Program Manager have a combined work experience of over 60 years in delivering community engagement events and programming, and school programming in the US, Nigeria and UK. Our core team of instructors and artists are versatile and work really well with all ages. They have a combined 100-120 years experience in community engagement work all across the globe. Currently, we are actively in search of a local music therapist to join our team.

I must share a story that touched me and is a contributing factor to why we remain driven. With permission from her to share, a community member who has lived here in Los Gatos for over 30 years suffered in silence, felt isolated and was greatly discriminated against after her husband passed away well over 15 years ago. This woman migrated from Ethiopia and is a homeowner. She was treated badly and mostly by people she knew. Neighbours and some former "friends". At the height of the harassment, threats and some loss of her property as experienced from these so-called neighbours, she said she really felt lonely, unsafe and suffered from anxiety for so many years. She felt there was no outlet or resources closeby and didn't really trust anyone at that point. I would probably feel the same way. I felt so sorry to hear she had gone through so much and was navigating it all without any support. This should never have to happen to anyone amongst us. There is so much tension in the land at this time and the pandemic's effects are only just rising to the fore. We want to help the often unheard amongst us. Those whose untold stories and sufferings go unnoticed for a myriad of reasons.

We want to address existing gaps in our community with a systemic lens. We want to be a part of the solution.

AWO, through its Wellness for Huemanity Program, proposes an innovative approach to improve individual wellness, community health and quality of life through shared narratives, engaging interactive activities and experiential learnings related to boosting health and emotional well-being. Our Wellness for Huemanity Program aims to accomplish health and social goals such as improving mental wellness, reducing stress and tension and alleviating pain. In addition to its healing potential, we focus on magnifying the message of diversity, inclusion, equity, belonging and lived experience. We believe when people think collectively, can creatively collaborate and are introduced to new cultures, ultimately, they enhance and expand their understanding, appreciation and respect of diverse communities and perspectives. Participants in our program will explore their own identities and intersect with those around them. Services we provide will help individuals recognize the role diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and lived experiences play in enhancing community cohesion and building strong local communities. For the first time and in a structured setting, if this opportunity is given, we will be providing not just a one time experience per event but a continuum of collective experiences over a period of time and through weekly or biweekly sessions. This is a next level development for our Town, and for our community engagement services to the community. With additional space, if given the chance, we automatically expand and enhance our service offerings and reach those amongst us that often fall through the cracks. I hope we can collaborate with you. Thank you in advance of your consideration.

Warmest Regards,  
Folake Phillips  
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